

Testimony in Support of House Bill 6242: An Act Prohibiting Surcharges from being Levied on Utility Customers to Subsidize Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Capacity.

February 20, 2019

Dear Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, and members of the committee,

I am strongly in favor of this bill and recommend a vote in favor without amendment.

Expanded facilities for pumping, processing and storage create widespread vulnerability. Compressors are required every 50 miles are common sites for methane plumes. Leaks, and explosions can contaminate our environment irreparably causing harm to our health, food and water resources, and property values. Rivers Alliance CT states, "Intentional releases added to unintentional accidents make natural gas as bad as coal. The serious wastes from fracking in other states cannot be overlooked. There is one accident or leak every 1-3 days in the country and that is not including local pipelines."

Meanwhile oil prices have declined so the value of gas adds less to our overall energy plan. Renewable solutions like solar have gained in value. Except for short-term profits, natural gas expansion is a bad choice, and even the long-term profits look bad. As an example, the Synapse Energy Economics Report for the CT Fund for the Environment and other NGO's have concluded: ...savings created by the ANE pipeline [Access New England Pipeline by Spectra Energy] will be outweighed by its costs, which are more than twice what the proponents have generally reported. We have also determined that the need for natural gas in New England will decrease dramatically within a few years of ANE's construction, alleviating the capacity constraints cited to justify the pipeline. Natural gas use is forecasted to decline dramatically in 2023—just a few years after the ANE pipeline is supposed to be fully operational. Existing laws—renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency resource standards, long-term requirements for additional Hydropower and wind power, and carbon dioxide (emissions caps—require a significant reduction in natural gas-fired generation throughout New England. This decrease in overall gas use will reduce capacity constraints of existing pipelines and the need for new pipelines. By 2023, shortly after ANE's construction, natural gas-fired generation is estimated to be 27 percent lower than in 2015. And by 2030, natural gas-fired electric generation is estimated to be 41 percent lower than in 2015.

Please prohibit surcharges from being levied on utility customers to subsidize interstate natural gas pipeline capacity.

Thank you,

Katherine Freygang
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